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files; 6 files of sorts; 4 gouges of sizes; 50 lbs. iron nails; 2 planes, with 2 spare irons; 3 hand saws; screws. These things will be useful at the lakes, where carpenters are in demand.

Clothing.—The shirts are flannel and cotton; turbans and thick felt caps for the head.

Books and Drawing Materials.—Norie; Bowditch; Thompson's 'Lunar Tables'; Gordon's 'Time Tables'; Galton's 'Art of Travel'; Buist's 'Manual of Observation'; Jackson's 'What to Observe'; Jackson's 'Military Surveying'; 'Admiralty Manual'; Cuvier's 'Animal Life'; Prichard's 'History of Man'; Keith's 'Trigonometry'; Krapf's 'Kisawahili Grammar'; Krapf's 'Kinika Testament'; Amharic Grammar (Isenberg's); Belcher's 'Mast Head Angles'; Cooley's 'Route to Unyamesi Lake'; and other miscellaneous works; 1 paint box complete, soft water colours; 1 small ditto, with Chinese ink, sepia and Prussian blue; 2 drawing books; 1 large drawing book; 1 camera lucida.

Portable domestic Medicine Chest.—Vilely made; it is glued, and comes to pieces. Some medicines for natives in packages. I have written to Zanzibar for more quinine, some morphia, Warbeng's drops, citric acid, and chiretta root. This country is a hot-bed of fevers.

Miscellaneous.—10 pieces red cloth for presents (3 expended); 3 knives for servants; 4 umbrellas; 1 hank salmon gut; 1 dozen twisted gut; 1 lb. bees wax; 2 dozen penknives; 2000 fishing hooks; 42 bundles fishing line; 2 lanterns (policeman's bull's eye and common horn); 2 iron ladles for casting lead; 1 house-wife, with buttons, needles, thread, silk, pins, &c.; 12 needles (sailor's) and palms; 2 pair scissors; 2 razors; 1 hone; 2 pipes; 1 tobacco pouch; 1 cigar case; 7 canisters snuff; 1 filter; 1 mouth filter; 1 looking-glass; 1 small tin dressing-case, with soap, nail-brush and tooth-brush (very useful); brushes and combs; 1 union jack (this precedes the caravan, in rear the flag of Zanzibar); 10 steels and flints (matches almost useless in this damp air).*

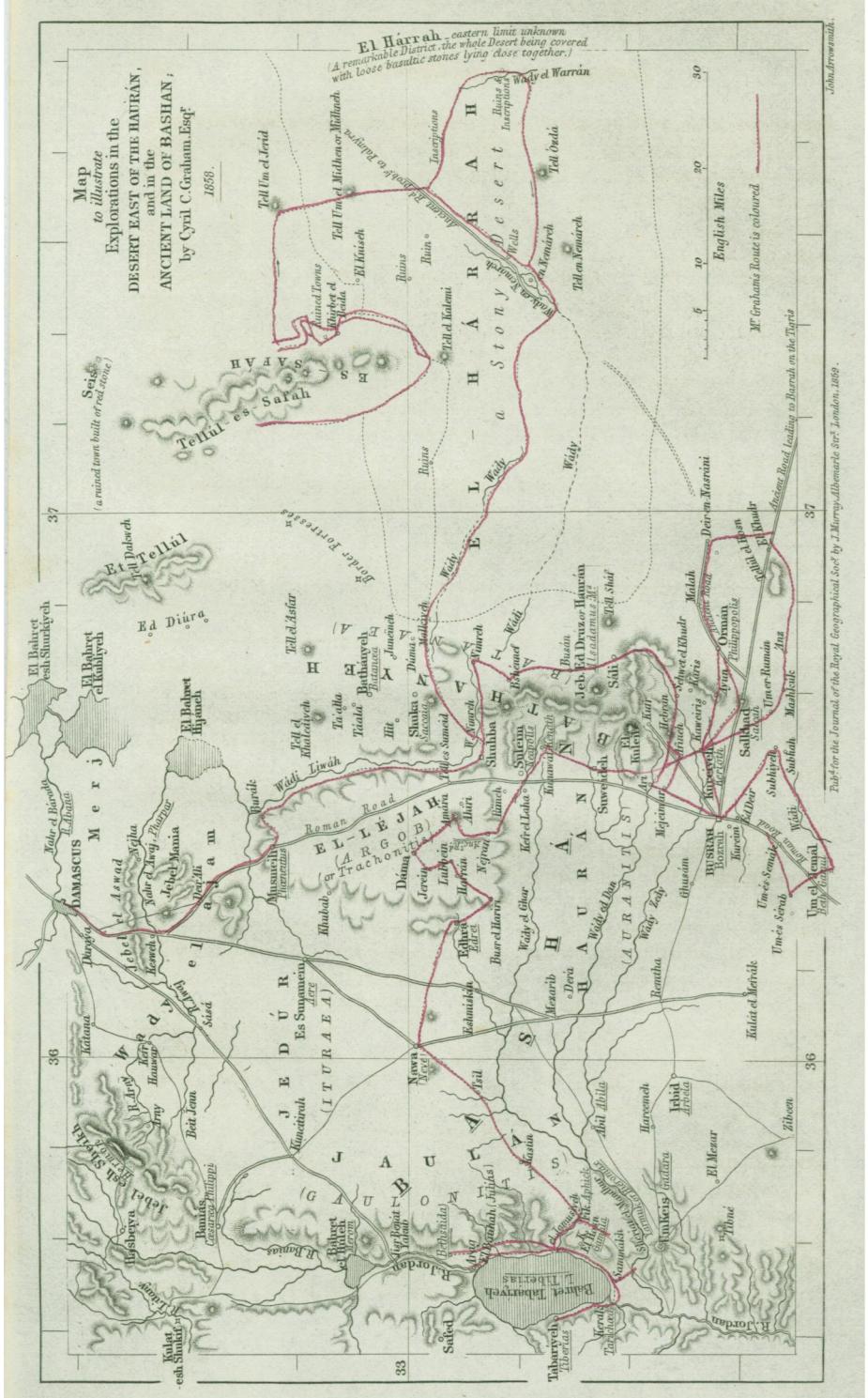
F. Galton, Esq.

VI.—*Explorations in the Desert East of the Haurán and in the Ancient Land of Bashan.* By CYRIL C. GRAHAM, Esq., F.R.G.S., &c.

Read, February 22, 1858.

IN the early spring of the year 1857, on my arrival at Jerusalem, from Egypt, having just concluded a journey of considerable length into the higher and less known countries through which the Nile flows, I began to make preparations for a very extended tour in Palestine and Syria. My object was to become as thoroughly acquainted as possible, not only with the general features of the country, but with all the minute details of the topography. I had long felt convinced of how much might be done by careful research, how many sites which have long since been forgotten might be rescued from oblivion; and that each step we make in our knowledge of the ancient topography of Palestine is of incalculable value, as a subject of general interest to all, but more especially as affording the strongest proofs of the invariable accuracy of the sacred Historian. Dr. Robinson and Dr. Eli Smith were the first

* A box containing botanical and geological specimens had been sent to the Secretary of the Bombay Geographical Society. For information, since received, of the farther progress of this Expedition, see "Proceedings" R. G. S., vol. iii.—ED.



travellers who, uniting great learning with considerable enterprise, devoted themselves to a careful survey of the Holy Land. Of the important results attained by them I need say nothing; their book speaks for itself; but as a traveller in the same country, and one who has visited every portion of the land which they visited, I can give my testimony to the remarkable accuracy of their book, and recommend it to all travellers who intend to devote some time and attention to the study of the geography of the Holy Land. But even their tour was hasty, much of the country they had wished to have seen, west of Jordan, was left unvisited, and the land east of Jordan they scarcely saw at all, except to follow in the beaten track of the few travellers who had already visited those regions.

So although they did much, yet very much more was left to be done, and an ample reward is still in store for any one who will devote some time to the careful exploring even of the lands west of the Jordan.

It may seem strange, now so many travellers annually visit Palestine, that some important advances should not be made every year in our knowledge of the country. But the very system of travelling, as it is generally pursued in the East, is calculated not only to be of no value scientifically, but even rather to mislead. Few travellers devote so long as six weeks to the whole of Palestine, including a journey to Damascus, many only three or four weeks; during that time they are entirely in the hands of a "terjimán," or "interpreter," who knows enough of their language to understand the commonest remarks made to him, and by answering with great readiness to queries about things of daily occurrence, and making a point of always pretending to understand everything, he leads his employers into the belief that he is really well acquainted with the language he professes; whereas in the majority of instances he has but a very confused idea of the purport of their questions, but he always has cunning enough to give some apparently satisfactory answer, which the deluded traveller carefully notes down, and thinks he has obtained some valuable information. In this way any site which you are particularly anxious to find may be discovered without any difficulty. Only ask, or get your dragoman to ask, if there be not a place called "so-and-so" somewhere near, you are sure to be told "Yes!" And when you ask where, the fellow will stretch out his arm and point "over there." Well, if you are satisfied with this degree of accuracy, you put down in your journal for the day, that the long lost site lies in such a position. "We did not visit it, as it was a little out of our road, but it is well known to all the Arabs by its original name." If you are more enquiring, you desire to be taken to the spot. Then you are either led about till it is quite dark, and you are quite tired, and the guide pretends to lose his way, and you

return with still this consolation that you have been near the spot, or else you are at once shown a site which your dragoman and the guide swear by the most solemn oaths to be the spot, bearing the identical name you mentioned. This may appear rather over-drawn, but I think those who have been long in the East will not think it is a caricature of Oriental travel. I have seen so many mistakes made in this way by travellers, and have read so frequently in books of "Eastern Travel," things which have evidently been palmed off on the writer—and usually all may be traced to the dragoman—that I feel it is not unnecessary to caution travellers against relying too implicitly on the information of these people, and above all against the practice of putting "leading" questions.

If you want really to obtain information in the East it must be done in a most roundabout manner, and you must learn to become a skilful diplomatist before you can hope to be very certain of success.

I have made these remarks rather with the view of setting travellers on their guard against a very dishonest and designing class of men, who from being well dressed, and so far accomplished that they apparently are acquainted with three or four languages, lead those who are for the first time in the East, and very naturally too, to believe that these dragomans are a very superior class to what they really are, and to treat them with the regard due to educated men. They have taken advantage of all this, and in very many instances the dragoman is master instead of servant. So much by way of preface.

After having travelled very carefully over the greater part of Palestine and over a considerable portion of Syria, I had a very strong desire to see that remarkable country to the south-east of Damascus, called the "Haurán"—a country which will ever claim the most solemn interest, being the old Land of Bashan, the country of that most remarkable people the "Rephaim," who occupied this land long before Abraham crossed the Desert, and among whom in later times, Og, the king of Bashan, was one of the greatest chiefs.

The first traveller in these parts, in modern times, was Seetzen, a gentleman who was attached to the Russian Embassy, and who in 1805 visited the Haurán. He left a short account of his journey in a letter addressed to Baron Zach, the celebrated astronomer of Gotha, in which he speaks with wonder of the old cities he found in the Haurán. Seetzen, however, saw very little of the country. He was constantly annoyed by the Arabs, and after a very short tour he returned to Damascus. Four years later, Burckhardt, having heard of Seetzen's discoveries, determined on a more careful examination of the Haurán.

He travelled over a great portion of this country, and even penetrated into that wilderness of rocks, of which I shall have to say more hereafter, the “Léjah.” He reached the mountains which form the eastern limit of Bashan, and even crossed over to the eastern side of those mountains, where he had a full view of the great Desert, in which he saw numbers of ancient towns scattered about, and heard of many more ; but great as was his desire to visit them, he found it impossible to accomplish this on account of the Arab tribes who were always sweeping the plain.* Burckhardt left us a very detailed account of his travels. No work I have yet met with gives so accurate an idea of the Arabs and their customs. He was so thoroughly acquainted with the Arabic dialects, and the habits of the people, that he could frequently pass for a native. His accuracy can almost always be relied on ; the only error which is now and then found is in the name of a place, but otherwise the traveller who follows in his footsteps will never have to complain of blunders and inaccuracies. It is wonderful, considering the difficulties he encountered, and the secret and hurried way in which his notes were necessarily taken down, that so few errors should have been made.

He was certainly one of the most remarkable travellers on record. In 1815 Buckingham travelled in the Haurán, but nearly in Burckhardt's track : he wrote a book giving a narrative of his journey. But the most carefully compiled work on this country is that of Mr. Porter,† who was the most recent traveller in the Haurán, having undertaken a journey in January 1853. I had the good fortune of being much with Mr. Porter in the spring and summer of 1857, and to him I am greatly indebted for a vast amount of information about Syria and Palestine. The accounts he gave me of his visit to the ancient cities of Bashan made me more than ever anxious to travel in that country ; but what excited my desire most, was the account he gave of the view from the Castle at Salkhad and of the numerous cities which both he and Burckhardt had seen in the Desert far away eastward, which had remained uninhabited for centuries, and which no European had ever been so fortunate as to reach.

I think if you were to tell the most phlegmatic person, that from an ancient castle perched on a hill, and which had been the turning point of all travellers, a wide plain extended, which as far as the eye could reach was dotted over with towns, which were known to have been uninhabited for centuries, but which no living person on record had entered, his enthusiasm would be kindled, and he would be desirous of sallying out on a journey of discovery

* Burckhardt's ‘Travels in Syria.’

† Porter's ‘Five Years in Damascus.’

into this plain. But when that castle perched on a hill is Salcah, and that hill "the Hill of Bashan," and those cities in the plain "the cities of the Land of Moab far and near," the very cities of which the Prophet spoke when he said, "The cities thereof shall be desolate, without any to dwell therein"—then an irresistible desire comes upon one to go out among these cities, and see the habitations of a once powerful people who have so completely passed away, that as far as we know no descendants of them are now to be found. I made up my mind to use every endeavour to explore this desert and those old cities, being well assured that the results of such a journey would amply compensate for the difficulties and dangers incurred.

I was at Damascus in August, and preparing for this journey in Bashan, when an Arab came one day to my tent. I soon found that he belonged to the "Wulid 'Ali," a great division of the "'Anazeh," who are the largest and most powerful tribe in the Desert. His people were encamped by the lakes east of Damascus, and as I wished to see these lakes very much, I asked him if I should be welcome, were I to go back with him to his tribe. He assured me I should be well received, and so we started off together.

In older maps, the two great rivers of Damascus, the "Barada" and the "'Awaj," are represented as falling into one lake in the plains east of the city, and it was not until Mr. Porter went out into this plain in 1853 that the error was corrected, and instead of one lake, three lakes now appear in our maps. When I reached the encampment, which was by the middle lake, I began to talk about the next day's journey. I wished to go out to some ruins which had been seen east of the lakes by Mr. Porter, but which he had not succeeded in reaching. So all being settled, I started early on the following morning with a party of horsemen for these ruins. The encampment was a very great one, stretching away southwards from where I was for miles, while the whole plain was literally covered with the flocks of goats, and the camels of the Arabs. We rode rapidly across the plain, the Arabs as usual playing and scampering about on their beautiful mares. The three black ruins were before us. The Arabs call them "ed-Diúra," the "convents," but this name they give to most old buildings. It was the southernmost of them that I reached first.

This was a square tower, of a shape which I found afterwards to be very common in the Haurán, and built of hard basalt; but within it was a room which really had the appearance of having been once used as a chapel. Coloured plaster was still to be seen on the walls, and deeply cut crosses on the door-posts, so that this building may have once been employed as a convent.

Many fragments of stone and some columns lay about the

building, and the apparent remains of houses, but all completely ruined. I could find no inscription to throw light upon this place.

From the top of the tower was a very extensive view. Immediately to the east lies a chain of hills called by the general name “et Tellúl,” and to the south of these and far away in the eastern plain could be seen several peaks, which I was informed were the summits of the chain of hills, which rises from the region “es-Safáh.”

The Safáh was again another place of which we know nothing certain. Both Burckhardt and Porter had collected what information they could, but a great mystery hung over it, and, as will be seen in the sequel, their information was not very accurate. I asked about it then from my Arabs. They said they had been there to fight the Arabs of the place, but that it was a bad place, and the people bad people, and that it would be impossible for me to go there in safety.

They spoke to me a great deal about “el-Hárrah,” where they said the stones were covered with writing and pictures. I could not ascertain from them accurately where el-Hárrah was, as their accounts differed so widely, some saying it was three—others, eight and ten days’ journey off. All gave me the normal answer “Beïd,” “far.” On leaving this ruin I went to the other two, which were evidently castles, the three forming most probably a line of border fortresses to protect the country against the incursions of the Arabs. After this I went to the other lakes, the northernmost called “Bahret-esh-Shurkíyeh,” and the southernmost of all “Bahret-Hijáneh.” There I fell in with the great Arab chief “Mohammad ed-Dúhi,” who was on the move. The procession strongly reminded me of that which was formed when Jacob was going to meet his brother Esau. The goats and the sheep went first, then came some of the camels, then the horses and the mares, and the wives and the children, and in the most central and safe position of all was a gaily decked dromedary with a little pavilion on his back in which was placed the favourite wife of the sheikh. The procession was closed in the same manner, a large body of horsemen bringing up the rear.

This is the general order in which a great tribe crosses the Desert. When all is safe they cover an immense space of ground, it being sometimes several hours’ ride from one end to the other of the strolling mass. But when danger threatens, of which they have early notice from their light cavalry, the caravan is rapidly concentrated, and before very long they are arranged for battle. It is difficult to estimate the exact number of an Arab tribe, but I should not think that there were fewer than 25,000 horsemen in

this one division of the 'Anazeh.* This would give a population of about 120,000 souls. The great tribe of the 'Anazeh consists of four divisions, each having its appointed country. 1. The division "es-Saba," who in the spring and summer months are to be found about Tadmor and on the edge of the Desert from near Damascus, as far north as Aleppo. So that all land-traffic between these cities has ceased. This tribe is more numerous and powerful than the Wulid 'Ali.

2. The Wulid 'Ali, who occupy the land from the south of the Saba country to near Salcah.

3. The Rúala, who range from Salcah southwards.

4. The Nejd, who are always in the heart of Arabia.†

The first two divisions migrate every year in the early autumn to the Euphrates. The latter two pass the winter in Nejd. The Saba and the Wulid 'Ali are the pest of Syria. The government is too weak to protect the peasants, and every year some village is deserted, it being impossible for the poor people to live on account of the arbitrary exactions of these robbers. The government gives a large sum annually to these tribes for the safe passage of the pilgrim caravan to Mecca. But notwithstanding the subsidy they take good care once in every four or five years that the caravan is robbed, just to keep up their custom, lest too great security might tempt the Pasha to suspend, or at least diminish the annual payment. But in addition to this the Pasha gives large presents to the chiefs as black mail that they may spare the gardens and vineyards of Damascus. They now encamp within five hours of the very gates of the city, and even the government authorities dare not stir out far, although there is a garrison of nearly ten thousand Turkish soldiers in Damascus. To such a state of weakness and imbecility has the miserable Turkish empire been reduced !

On returning to Damascus I made my last preparations for my journey into the Haurán, took with me letters to some of the most powerful of the Drúz chiefs, with whose help I hoped to succeed in the objects I had in view, and taking leave with infinite regret of the most beautiful of cities and of my kind friends there, I set out one afternoon early in September, and rode to "Deir 'Ali," a Drúz village, situated a little south of the "Nahr el 'Awaj," the Pharpár. The success of my whole journey depended upon the

* This estimate is far too high. The whole 'Anazeh tribe could not muster more than 10,000 horsemen. Perhaps Mr. Graham means men, not horsemen. I think it would be well to say "25,000 men," or "fighting men."—J. L. PORTER.

† The four great divisions of the 'Anazeh are:—1. *Wulid 'Aly*; 2. *Ruala*; 3. *Hesanch*; and 4. *El-Beshar*. The *Sab'a* are a sub-tribe of the last; and the *Nejd* Arabs, though allied to the 'Anazeh, are now scarcely recognized as belonging to the tribe.—J. L. P.

goodwill and assistance of the Drúzes, who are the present settled inhabitants of Bashan. They live in the very cities out of which, more than three thousand years ago, the Rephaim were expelled, through the help of God, by the victorious Israelites.

Immediately on entering the village, I placed myself under the protection of the Drúz sheikh, who sent his son and an escort of his people with me.

We first visited "Musmeih," described by Burckhardt, and which has been identified with the ancient "Phæneutus," the first station from Damascus, on the old road leading through "Trachonitis." It must have been a city of some importance under the Roman government, judging from the beauty of the temple and other public buildings. I found in this town alone, of all those in the Haurán, specimens of three orders of architecture, viz. the Doric, the Ionic, and the Corinthian, "Musmeih" is built just within the rocks of the Léjah, and, like almost all the towns which are situated on the border of this district, is now uninhabited.

When I set out from Damascus, I had hoped to have penetrated from this point into the interior of the Léjah, which many have attempted to do, but no one with success, as far as I know, except Burckhardt. The difficulty arises from this:—The Léjah is inhabited solely by a tribe of Arabs called "es-Solút," who have almost always blood-feuds with the Drúzes, and to trust oneself under such circumstances among the wild rocks of the Léjah would be madness.* A small body of men could inflict the greatest mischief on a large army when once engaged in this place, as was the case with Ibrahim Pasha's army, when he made war against the Drúzes of the Haurán.

At the present time I was not more fortunate than other travellers. The Drúzes had feuds with the Arabs in this part, and my escort refused to enter the Léjah. I subsequently accomplished the journey into the interior from "Nejrán," on the south, which in the end was just as well, as Burckhardt had explored the northern part of the Léjah and not the southern part, and it was that portion which I was enabled to explore. For the present I was forced to content myself with skirting the eastern border, and after visiting one by one the numerous towns there, I came to Shuhba, the largest of them all, and the residence of one of the most powerful of the Drúz chiefs. Of the numerous towns on the eastern border of the Léjah there is only one north of Shuhba which is inhabited.

The general appearance of them all is precisely the same.

* There are four other small tribes in the Léjah, namely, *el-Medlej*, *es-Selmán*, *ed-Dhohery*, and *es-Siyaleh*.—J. L. P.

Every house is built of the black basalt with which that country abounds ; many of the houses are in so perfect a state that they might be inhabited again to-morrow : and, indeed, now and then two or three of the Drúz families will leave the larger towns and form a new community in one of these long-deserted places. All they have to do is to take possession ; they have not even the trouble of making a door, for they find stone doors already hung.* At present the Drúz population is far too small for the country : only a very small portion of the soil is cultivated. If the number of the Drúzes were twice what it now is, not only would Syria gain from the large increase in the amount of corn which would be sent to Damascus, but the Arabs who now periodically visit the "Jaulán" and the "Jedúr," and spoil the whole country, would be kept in check by the Drúzes, and never suffered to pass west of the Haurán. It should be the object of a good Government to induce as much as possible the Drúzes of Lebanon to join their brethren in Bashan, and this would tend in two ways to strengthen Syria, both by checking the Arabs in the way I have mentioned, and, by diminishing the Drúz population in Lebanon, it would diminish the number of those deadly feuds which subsist between these people and the Christians, and the frequent recurrence of which so weakens the country.

On reaching Shuhba, I at once proposed to the chief a journey to the Safáh. He opposed it very much, urging the danger and fatigue of such an expedition ; but, finding me determined to go, he sent for the sheikh of the Arab tribe "Ghiás," with whom he was, for a wonder, on good terms. His encampment was ten miles off ; so, a bargain being struck with the Arab chief, whose name was "Mutlug," I started off with him at once for his tents. The encampment was just at the edge of the mountains, commanding a splendid view of the eastern Desert and of the lakes to the north, and in the far distance could be seen the green gardens of Damascus and the white top of Hermon. It was an extremely important place for taking bearings, and the more so because no former traveller had been at so eastern a point of the Haurán. From this place I saw numbers of ancient towns which have not yet appeared in our maps. I carefully noted the bearings of them, and from these and the itinerary my map is made, which, although from the want of proper instruments it can boast of no great accuracy, will yet, I hope, be of some service in enabling future travellers to find again the places I visited. For the names I can speak with the greatest confidence, as I made it an invariable rule to get all the names written down, whenever I had an opportunity, by the secretary of the Drúz chiefs. All who know

* This applies most especially to the towns in the mountains of the Haurán.

anything of Eastern languages will appreciate the importance of this, so many mistakes having arisen from travellers trusting too implicitly to their own ear, which may easily be deceived with regard to Semitic radicals.

From this encampment our arduous journey began. The chief sent four Arabs in advance to act as scouts, for the country through which we had to pass lay in the midst of the great enemies of the "Ghiás," the 'Anazeh, while Mutlug himself and six men accompanied me. We were all mounted on dromedaries, each animal, besides carrying two of us, being laden with two skins full of water, for we could expect to find hardly any water in the Desert.

On our way we passed the towns which I had seen from the tents, and several other ancient towns besides which had not been noted before. The most important one was "Malkiyeh," near the edge of the Desert. On the wall of a public building there I found a Greek inscription, from which it appears the Greek name was likewise "Malkaia."

Of the others, I should mention "Dúma," "Theimeh," * and "Torba," not as containing any interesting works of the later rule, but as presenting some of the most perfect examples of the old houses of Bashan. On reaching the foot of the mountains, I found myself on a fine plain covered with shrubs, the soil as rich and naturally fertile as any in the Haurán, although for centuries it has remained untilled, but which, if cultivated, would no doubt produce the same fine crops which make the Haurán still celebrated as the granary of Damascus.

But we soon came to a most curious break of this fine land, for we entered upon a part where suddenly the whole plain became covered with loose basaltic stones, and in such numbers and lying so closely together that the dromedaries could hardly make their way across them. "Here," said my Arabs, "begins el-Hárrah." "And how far does it extend?" I asked. "Oh, for many days," said they; and, as I afterwards had reason to believe, this region extends eastwards five days' journey, while it is from a day to a day and a half's journey in breadth, or from north to south. Throughout the whole of this strip the plain is covered with innumerable stones, rounded like boulders, but all of basalt. The name "Harrah," which this region bears, probably comes from the root "harr," heat: a similar tract is known by the same name in Mesopotamia, and indeed in many other parts of the Desert. We continued to travel all that night, in order to avoid observation as much as possible. At daybreak we came to some unimportant ruins, and then, after making a short halt, we pro-

* Probably the "Bezeine" Burckhardt heard of.

ceeded to the southern border of the Safáh. As we approached, a great chain of hills opened to my view, the southernmost of which was the only one known to Mr. Porter, and marked in his map as Tell es-Safa (the name should be written Safáh). The region called "es-Safáh," from which the chain rises which is called "Tellúl es-Safáh," has, I suppose, few parallels. It is a volcanic district, or should rather be described as a volcanic island, rising abruptly out of the Desert. Its breadth is in some places fifteen miles. The appearance it presents internally is most remarkable. If we imagine a vast quantity of molten metal to be confined in some vessel, and its surface violently agitated by some powerful agent, and while in that state suppose the mass suddenly to be cooled, then the appearance which the surface of the metal may be conceived to assume would probably be most nearly exemplified in the wild and savage aspect of the Safáh.

It resembles no other formation that I am aware of except the Léjah, in the Haurán, and both these districts resemble more nearly the appearance presented to us by some of the volcanic regions in the moon than anything we have on our own globe.

We stayed but a few minutes at the southernmost point of the Safáh, and then continued round the border and began coasting the eastern side. We had not gone very far when my attention was attracted by some marks cut in one of the large basaltic stones which lay loose in our path. On examining it more closely I detected what I took to be characters, and carefully copied them down. A little farther on I found a similar stone, with a palm-tree engraved on it, and likewise an accompanying inscription. I was now in great surprise, not only at finding inscriptions at all in this desert region, but in so strange a position, on the loose stones lying on the ground, and in a character to me totally unknown. It will readily be conceived how great must have been my excitement and how diligently I sought for more inscriptions. It was some little time before I found another, and then again a solitary one, so that I began to imagine these were stones on some ancient road, and marking the distance between stations. While I was speculating upon this, and where the city might be to which the road led, we rounded a point, and a place built of white stone stood before me. It was the more startling, because nowhere near is there any white stone to be found—all the stones in that region being black. The town which I now had before me was similar in most respects to those of the Haurán, being built entirely of stone, and to all appearance of the same high antiquity with the cities of Bashan. The greatest object of wonder in this place was a large building of white stone, consisting of a square tower at the south end, surrounded by a strong wall, with turrets at each of the corners.

This building, whatever it may have been intended for, was unfinished ; but so fresh did it appear, that the workmen might have left it yesterday. That it was more modern than the rest of the town, not only does its architecture testify, but in the tower I saw many stones which had evidently been employed in some former building : amongst others some curious ornamental carvings and a figure of a lion, which bore marks of very high antiquity. I was not so fortunate as to find any inscriptions in this place, although I sought carefully for them. I asked the Arabs if they had any traditions about when and by whom this place had been inhabited. All they could tell me was that it had been inhabited up to the time of Tamerlenk, but that this warrior had driven all the inhabitants away and destroyed their city. The only name they have for the place is “ Khirbet el Beida ” (the white ruin).

On the eastern border of es Safáh are four other ruined towns ; but in none of them could I find any inscriptions. They are all alike in style, but inferior in preservation to the old towns of Bashan. I should remark that for a certain distance the stony district gives place to a fine plain, on which is not a single stone, and it is just by this rich land that the five towns are situated. According to the Arabs, no other ruins are found about the Safáh.

I originally intended to follow the Safáh to its northernmost limit and then to go to a ruined town the Arabs told me of, called Seis, the approximate position of which I was able to mark on the map, as the hill under which the town lies could be distinctly seen from the Safáh ; but our scouts having brought us word that a party of our enemies were in that direction and not far from us, and that almost certainly they belonged to a portion of the tribe encamped at Seis on account of the water there, I was very reluctantly obliged, after following the Safáh for some distance, to give up exploring the whole of this extraordinary region. I was the more desirous of visiting Seis because the Arabs told me it was built of “ red ” stone. I have already said something about the general appearance of the Safáh ; but I should add something more about its internal structure. The hills which rise from the Safáh are at distances varying from four to ten miles from the edge ; from the foot of these hills to the border we have this sea of basalt intersected with cracks and fissures, sometimes 20 feet in breadth and many more in depth. These ravines are quite impassable, and frequently such a fissure has to be followed a very great distance before it becomes possible to cross it.

Here, as in the Léjah, those who know the district may remain in safety and defy the most powerful foe. It was in an attack on the Arabs with whom I now was, that Mohammad ed-Dúhi got entangled among the rocks of the Safáh and lost a great number of his people : two of his brothers were killed, and he himself lost

the use of his right arm from a spear wound. The Safáh is even more horrible than the Léjah, for there, at least, are many patches of good soil, while here I could not see a single spot where there was any soil. Some “botm”* trees grew here, but I think no other shrub. The hills form a long range. I counted 19 distinct peaks ; the highest of them may be about 600 feet above the level of the plain. There are no springs, and the only water here is collected in hollows from the rains. Four or five tribes of Arabs frequent this region as soon as the rains commence ; but in the hot season they are forced to go elsewhere in search of water, and during these months the Safáh is uninhabited. These tribes are always carrying on war with the 'Anazeh, who spend the summer about the Haurán. They happily have no fire-arms, their weapons consisting of a spear, some 18 feet in length, and a scimetar. Amongst the Rúala Arabs several of the chiefs wear a coat of mail under their dress, which saves them from any ordinary wounds, and so makes their enemies believe them to be under the special protection of the “Ján.” I know one Drúz chief who has a suit of mail.

Eastward of where I now was were to be seen four hills—the northernmost “Tell Um el Jeríd,” the southernmost “Tell 'Ozda”; and I now resolved on striking across to these hills, being curious to reach the summit of one of them to have a view of the Desert farther east, and to look over a waste which had not been passed for many a century by any European. Nothing could be seen but one vast plain, bounded only by the horizon, and which reaches, it seems, without a single break, to the Euphrates. It was, indeed, a view which made one reflect : all around me was desolation, not a creature of any kind to be seen, not a tree, not a shrub, but all about me were the traces of a people who long, long ago had gazed on the same plain, but who had now so completely passed away that the question of their very name and race is one of dispute. I thought much on the curious characters I had found on the stones, and felt very anxious to find more, with the hope of some light being thrown on these inscriptions. I now turned my attention entirely to discover some more of these engraved stones. I went southwards, and presently, to my delight and astonishment, I came upon, not one stone, as before, but a space where for two or three hundred yards in circumference every stone had some mark and bore the representation of some beast or other thing, and almost invariably the figure or picture was accompanied by an inscription in this mystic character. It was night, and my Arabs lay asleep. I could not rest, my mind was so occupied with what I had seen. I wandered about among these old stones : all was still, and as the bright light of the full moon shone on the figures and letters cut

* *Pistacea terebinthus*.—J. L. P.

in the stones, I imagined almost that I was in a dream and had been transported to some wonderful place of the dead. One thought succeeded another as I gazed on these marvellous stones, and tried to picture to myself what people they were who centuries ago had lived here and had employed themselves in carving these curious symbols. What did it all mean? And when the early light of day appeared I began to copy these writings, fatigue and hunger being quite forgotten in the intense interest of the scene.

As the sun rose a little above the plain we prepared to depart, the aim of our journey this day being a wádi in the desert eastwards. I came upon a succession of these places where all the stones bore some inscription: sometimes they would be near the ruins of some ancient place, but in many instances they were quite alone in the stony Hárrah. I found east of the Safah another curious building, called "el Kníseh" (the church)—a name which the Arabs universally give to any very old building; but no sign whatever of Christian worship, no cross or other emblem, was to be seen here. The Arabs had an absurd tradition about this place; but it is not worth mentioning here.

While continuing my journey southwards, I came to a curious road cut right through the Hárrah. It was not paved, but as far as I could see ran in a straight line. All the stones had been carefully picked out and piled up against the side, so that a fine wide space was left for the road. Its direction where I saw it was north-east and south-west nearly, and led probably to Palmyra. I followed it for some distance, and was informed by the Arabs that it went to "Deir en Nasráni," which I subsequently found to be true, so that probably this was the high road leading from Bozrah to Palmyra in the flourishing days of these two great cities. Presently we were alarmed by the sight of distant camels, so we turned off eastward and at length came to a wádi, where were again several remains, known as "el-Warrán." Among some ruins I got a curiously carved red stone, which is now in the museum of the Royal Asiatic Society. Some imagine it to be an idol; perhaps it is. That was the idea of my Arabs, who called the wádi "wádi es-Senam." It is worth while for those who are curious in such things to look at this stone. I should have much liked to have followed this wádi for some distance, as I had reason to suppose that other remains were to be found; but water had already begun to fail us, indeed we had lost one dromedary from fatigue, and so I was compelled to make again for the Haurán. On our way we passed close to Tell 'Ozda', a solitary hill, a little to the east of Tell en Nemáreh, and then we entered a broad river bed, in the centre of which were situated on a high mound some ancient buildings. These again closely resembled those old houses of Bashan,

with the beams of stone and doors still perfect. One of the houses, the most perfect one, had long been venerated by the Arabs of the Desert as the residence at some remote period of a lady who bore the gentle name of "Nimreh bint en-Nimúr" (Panthress daughter of Panthers). Her shrine was decked after the Arab fashion with tattered garments—for in this way do the Muslems pay homage, when a garment is in such tatters that it can no longer be worn at all; they liberally adorn the sacred shrine of some celebrated derwîsh with the remnants of their filthy rags, and those who know the Arabs must be well aware how long a derwîsh may wait before he may hope to get these cast-off clothes. Over the door of this lady's house was an old inscription, but quite illegible; I could not even make out in what character it was written.

At en-Nemáreh I found the greatest number of inscriptions on the basalt stones I had met with anywhere. I suppose there were thousands of stones bearing the marks of figures of animals, some tolerably well executed, others again so badly done, that I almost began to think that at these places the schools had been held, and that I had before me the copy-books of children who had been dead perhaps two or three thousand years.* We were much disappointed in finding no water here: all the wells were dry, the summer being just at its close, and the early rains had not yet begun; and as we were now in distress from thirst, we followed the wádi a considerable distance, hoping to meet with some hollow where a little water might still be left. We at last got some green stuff left from the winter rains, with which we were fain to be contented, and having filled our water-skins with this precious liquid, we started for the Haurán and reached the encampment of Mutlug in twenty hours.

The next morning I rode off to Shuhba on Mutlug's favourite Nejd horse which he had taken in a battle from the 'Anazeh, and was welcomed and received with all honour by the Drúz Sheikh "Fáres." Thus ended this portion of my journey, the results of which were:—

1. The investigation of the exact nature of the region es-Safáh, which had never before been visited.

* Since writing the above, I have had time more carefully to examine these inscriptions, and to compare them with the characters of other languages which could be in any way historically connected with this country. I do not find any alphabet which contains all, or even the fourth part, of the signs which I have; but the character which most nearly approaches to these is the Himyaritic character. There are possibly thirteen—certainly ten—signs which both languages have in common. Whether in both instances the value is the same I have not yet been able to determine; but even the fact of ten being absolutely alike in each is not likely to be the result of a mere coincidence. However, I refer the reader who is interested in this subject to the 'Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society,' in which my inscriptions will be published, together with some remarks on the method by which I have attempted to decipher the language.

2. The discovery of a chain of hills of some length rising out of the Safáh.

3. The discovery of the tract el-Hárrah with its ruins and inscriptions.

It will here not be out of place to say a few more words about this country east of the Haurán, of whose history, as far as I am aware, we know hardly anything. The accounts in Scripture are confined to Bashan, and the eastern limit of this country is frequently mentioned to have been "Salcah," now called "Salkhad," while the range of mountains now known as "Jebel ed Drúz" form the geographical limit of Bashan. Among the later historians no mention seems to be made of any towns east of the Haurán; and even the Arab historian "Abulfeda," who is so accurate in describing the geography of Syria and the adjoining parts, never mentions any of these Desert towns.

So I think it probable that they were no longer inhabited in his day. Again the absence of all Greek inscriptions, which are found in such profusion in all the villages of the Haurán, seems to argue that this country never came under the dominion of the Greeks. The houses are of the same solid construction in many instances as those of Bashan. But the most remarkable fact in connexion with this country is that of finding inscriptions in a character which, whatever it may be, is certainly no recognized form of any Semitic language.

Whether this country once was tributary to Phœnicia, or whether we have on these stones inscriptions of a far earlier period, traces perhaps left by the old Rephaim themselves who first occupied this land, is at present mere matter for speculation; but should these inscriptions some day be deciphered, we may hope to have some light thrown upon the history of a country of which we seem at present to know nothing, and of a people who may have been perhaps the earliest emigrants out of Shinar, and the original founders of the cities of the Land of Bashan and of Moab.

On my return to Shuhba I found the Drúz chief sitting amongst his people in one of the old temples of the place, which he made his summer residence. A grand feast was prepared in honour of my safe return, and all the men of the place dropped in, one after another, to make their Selám to me. The customs of the Drúzes are more strictly Oriental than those of any race in this part of the East, excepting always the Arabs of the Desert. Those who wish to see the same practices going on, and the same ceremonies in daily observance, of which they read so repeatedly in the Old Testament, can nowhere do so with the same advantage as amongst these Drúz people and the Arabs of the Desert. The former of these represent most perfectly the more civilised and polished population of the towns, and the agricultural population, who while they

are powerful and able to resist oppression, have yet the will and the wisdom to cultivate the land. Their religion and their difference of race having made them very exclusive, they have been altogether unaffected by the influence which has acted on the Mohammedan population. Not that amongst the Muslems any great change has occurred: on the contrary, even in such a city as Damascus—where commerce has so long flourished, and consequently brought the people in contact, more or less, with different nations—you might imagine that you were living in the reign of one of the Ben-hadád, so exactly does every little point of outward form agree with what we read of these times. But although no European element can be detected amongst the Muslems of Damascus, yet amongst the higher classes you can perceive that a certain Turkish or Tartar element has crept in which takes off a little from the perfect similarity which would otherwise subsist between the old Semites and the present Semitic population of Syria.

Among the Drúzes such is not the case, nor amongst the Arabs of the Desert. These are totally unchanged. They have the same black tents,* the same curtains to fence off the woman's portion of the tent, the same period for crossing the great Desert, the same order of march, the same feuds, and even the same arms and utensils that they had in their father Ishmael's day.

Every other race has, during the same number of centuries, progressed up to a certain point, and then retrograded; these alone have remained stationary, they never became more civilised or more learned than their ancestor, and now they are the same savage, wild, and restless people, the terror of their brethren, that they were in the olden times of the land of Israel. The Arab is a "wild ass" of a man.† So perfectly is the prophecy fulfilled!

Hospitality is really carried on to a great extent amongst the Drúzes; each village has its sheikh or hereditary chief; he is in many instances a man of great wealth, being the owner of immense numbers of sheep and cattle. My host at Shuhba, "Fáres 'Amer," was the wealthiest chief in the Haurán, and while I was there, each day he killed no less than four sheep, which were served up whole, with rice and cakes and other luxuries. I cannot farther interrupt the narrative of my journey to give more detailed account of the customs of these Drúzes, although I would gladly bring more to the notice of my countrymen, and Europeans in general, this remarkable and interesting people.

I remained three days at Shuhba, making very long excursions each day. I rode to "Shuka, Hft," and "Tell el Khaledíyeh," and

* Canticles, i. 5.

† See Gen. xvi. 12, where in the original stands, "And he will be a *wild-ass* man."

the ruined towns “Táala,” and “Ta’alla,” and “Batháneh,” and paid a visit to Sátam, the chief of an Arab tribe, who was a noted warrior. He had killed more men in the war with Ibrahim than any other individual. He had during many years been a bitter enemy of the Drúzes, but since “Fáres” had become so powerful he found it his interest to forget the past, and so now Sátam and Fáres and their people were “sawá sawá,” or one people, and the chiefs brothers. I learned a great deal from these people, who had never before been in contact with any European, and the curious questions which they asked me would astonish the English reader. From Shuhba I determined upon going to Nimreh which had not been visited, and then among the mountains down to Salcah. This would be almost all of it new country. I sent one of my servants with my baggage straight to “’Ari,” and this place I was to reach, if all went well, in four days.

There I was in hopes of arranging, through the influence of the Drúz chief, “Ismaíl el ’Atrash,” a journey among the cities east of Salkhad, which could only be effected from ’Ari, because Ismail alone of all the Drúz chiefs was on friendly terms with the great chief of the Rúala Arabs. So I started from Shuhba accompanied by four Drúzes and my Aethiopian servant;* all of us well armed and well mounted. We proceeded along the bed of a river which rises in the mountains of the Haurán, and flowing down into the plain near Shuhba, just skirts the edge of the Léjah and ultimately falls into the southernmost of the three lakes east of Damascus, the Bahret Hijáneh. This river bed, which in summer is always nearly dry, is called by the general name of “Wádi Liwáh,” but in the upper part of its course above Shuhba it is specially called “Wádi Nimreh.”

The rocks on each side of the Wádi Nimreh rise high ; on two of them I saw ruins of ancient places, but they were too much out of my way for me to visit them. On reaching Nimreh, an old town built on a hill just above the Wádi, I found that the river bed had branched off into two parts, one continuing nearly in the same line which I had followed from Shuhba, the other going towards the south-east. The source of each of these branches could not be far distant, but I did not visit the actual spot where either of them took its rise. In Nimreh I found nothing of particular interest. The houses resemble those which are found throughout the Haurán. I saw a Roman temple, but no inscriptions. The population of this and all the towns in these mountains are Drúzes. On leaving Nimreh I proceeded for a short distance southwards up a valley which joins the Wádi Nimreh, and then going east

* He came actually from Napata, the capital of Candace, Queen of the Aethiopians.

I gradually ascended the mountain range. Here, for the first time since I had been in the Haurán, I came upon springs; numerous little streams trickle down the western side of the mountains, and much grass grows near their course. These mountains are overrun by the flocks of the Arabs, who during the summer months encamp in the plain below. A year ago not a single town among the mountains south of Nimreh was inhabited, but in August of last year, two months before I was there, and immediately after the harvest was over, a few Drúzes made settlements in two places, "Bshénnef" and "Busán;" the first of these I made my sleeping quarters on the day I left Shuhba. Bshénnef is beautifully situated on the border of a wild glen which leads into the great plain below, and down which a winter torrent runs which makes its way far into the Desert, and is the same with the Wádi en Nemáreh, which I mentioned before.

Bshénnef must have been a place of considerable importance, not only judging from the house-doors, which were more than usually ornamented, but also from a beautiful temple which I saw there. I found many inscriptions deeply cut, in Greek, and all of which I copied. In this town was an interesting example of how perfectly the old houses of Bashan are adapted to receive new tenants. Two months before, the town was uninhabited, and like all those in that part, had been without inhabitants many a long year: all that the Drúzes had to do was to throw down a piece of matting, or those who could afford it, a piece of carpet, and to bring with them the few cooking utensils of which they had need. This formed the entire furniture of the houses; they then shut their stone doors and were secure against any sudden attacks of the Arabs. As soon as the early rains fell they would begin to sow; as the corn ripened their difficulties would increase: they were living on the very edge of the Desert, and this small body of men would have to defend their families, their flocks, and their corn against the Arabs. The next place of importance, which was likewise quite a new settlement, was "Busán." This is a still larger town than Bshénnef; the streets are very regularly built, and the stone houses perfect. It commands an extensive view of the Desert, which was especially interesting to me, as I could see a portion of the Hárrah like a black mark in the plain, and could to some extent combine the observations I had made in the last journey with those made in the present journey.

The Drúzes at Busán told me that they had already experienced great difficulty from the Arabs, especially from the 'Anazeh, whose chief encampment was at 'Ormán. From Busán I went to "Sáli,"* another very large town on the mountain. In one of the

* Spelt *Saleh* on Porter's map; but the orthography in the text I have from the Imám of the Drúzes.

streets is a large public building, walled all round with very high walls, but bearing no inscription, so I could not say for what it had been intended. Some of the finest springs in this part are at Sáli, which are a great attraction to the Arabs who come to drink here and give their camels and their flocks drink.

I now struck across south-westward for "Sehwet el Khudr." This portion of Bashan is very beautiful. One after another the narrow green valleys opened before me as I crossed the mountain chain, and here began the forests of oak, which are so often mentioned in the sacred writings, but which now only exist in a small portion of Bashan. All the western side of the mountains from near "Kunawát" southwards is covered with these beautiful trees, but nowhere else in all the Haurán are they found. They may indeed well be called "the beauty of Bashan." All the plain of the Haurán is destitute of trees: there is nothing to relieve the gloom of these black towns. Other trees too are found in this part—the wild pear, and a kind of thorn which bears a white fruit, larger than, though in appearance not unlike, the Siberian crab, called in Arabic "Dhaghúr." The oak is an evergreen, and its leaves prickly: there are two kinds, the one called "Sindyán," the other "Mellúl," corresponding, perhaps, with the "elah" and the "allon" of the Hebrew. There is likewise a general name for all oaks—"Balúteh," or acorn tree, "balút" meaning an acorn. The acorns of the Bashan oaks are immensely large, although the tree does not usually attain a great size. The wood seems to have been greatly valued in old days; it was always used when great strength was required. Of this wood the oars of the Tyrian galleys were made,* although forests of oak were to be found within a much shorter distance of the coast of Phoenicia, about Nazareth, and all that part of Palestine; but even now the finest oaks by far are those of Bashan. "Sehwet el Khudr" had been visited by Burckhardt.

Leaving this city a little to my left I came to "Hebrán." Hebrán is a very ancient town, and although we do not seem to find it mentioned in the Old Testament, it is doubtless of the same date with Bozrah and the other very old cities. It is within an hour and a half of the foot of the peak called "el Kuleib," whose summit must be about 6000 feet above the level of the Mediterranean; but it rises already from such high land that it has the appearance at Hebrán rather of a hill than of a mountain, although from the plain near Bozrah it looks very high and is a most important point for taking bearings. The Kuleib is a mountain of great beauty, cone-shaped, like the summit of Etna, and covered with a forest of oaks to its very top. This is possibly the hill spoken of by

* Ezekiel, xxvii. 6.

David as "God's high hill, even the hill of Bashan," and the "Mons Alsadamus" of the Romans; but more probably both these names applied to the whole chain now called "Jebel ed-Drúz," or "Jebel Haurán." I should mention that Burckhardt, and most travellers who succeeded him, have called this mountain "Kelb," or "Kelab el Haurán," instead of "Kuleib el-Haurán," making a mistake in the radical letters. The former would mean the "dog," the latter the heart, or little heart, of the Haurán.*

Immediately at the foot of this peak is an ancient town called "Kufr," remarkable on account of the high walls which surround it. The town gates, composed of two large slabs of stone, nearly 9 feet high and a foot or more in thickness, are still standing uninjured. I slept, I should say I passed the night, at Hebrán. I had not slept for many days; and the next morning early I mounted my horse and rode off to 'Ari, passing on the way through "'Afíneh" and "Mejeimar." The sheikh of Hebrán "would" follow me, although I tried to dissuade him, and for many days he would keep with me. He was reckoned a brave man, and had killed many a Turk, I was told, in his day. On reaching 'Ari I found the sheikh ready to receive me, and my servant and baggage safely arrived, but I heard bad news. The 'Anazeh were just on the move for the Nejd in Arabia; and the Drúz chief told me, and I well knew it to be true, that however much he might have presumed upon the circumstance of the truce with the Arabs, to make an arrangement for me had they been stationary, now that they were moving there could be no guarantee for my safe return, and they might rob me with impunity, for being once away from the Drúz country the people could no longer retaliate upon them.

I then proposed to the chief to accompany me himself with a strong party of his Drúzes. He said there would be great objections to that at present, but if I could wait ten or twelve days he would try and serve me. I was determined on no account to give up the attempt, I had so resolved on exploring east of Salkhad; and I agreed to wait a few days if he would then promise to go. He swore that he would be at my service with some of his most determined followers, and with this assurance I thought I would in the mean time visit Bozrah, and try to reach some of the cities south of Bozrah. This I did against his advice. He urged me not to go, for, said he, Bozrah now is surrounded by Arabs, and they are our enemies, and you will be robbed of everything. I could not give up so interesting a journey. Bozrah was one of the most important places in the whole country, and moreover I had a strong desire to go to "Um el Jemál," a city which Burckhardt so much wanted to reach; and besides, dangers

* Mr. Porter was the first traveller who pointed out this mistake.

of this kind are so often overrated : if you do not venture sometimes in that country you will end by doing nothing ; so off I started, looked in at Mejeimar and two other old places, and then the great city was before me. On approaching I found indeed a tremendous number of black tents ; the whole place was surrounded by them ; there must have been several hundreds of them. The Arabs soon spied me, and I saw horsemen coming towards me from all directions. The first two who rode up and screamed out a hoarse "Who are you?" were of the tribe es-Serhán. I told them I came to see their chief, and was at once conducted to his tent. The object uppermost in my mind was how to arrange my journey to "Um el Jemál," and to effect this a good deal of diplomacy had to be used. As the order of proceeding is always more or less the same in effecting a bargain with these people, and as it will give some insight into Arabian manners, it may not be uninteresting to give in detail the account of the transaction with the sheikh at Bozrah.

As a preliminary measure, I sat and stared, and drank coffee and stared again, and looked very grave. Presently some remarks would be made. I answered as many questions as I cared to answer, and the rest I evaded. At last I let it drop from me, but as if I had been very indifferent about it, that I rather wished to see "Um el Jemál." The sheikh then said, "I will go with you." "Very well," said I, "in truth will you?" "Alla rasí" (on my head be it), said he—this is the usual asseveration of the Orientals—at the same time placing his hand on his head. Then I sat and looked grave, and something else would be talked of. You must never appear eager if you have an object in view. Presently the sheikh himself again introduced the subject. "When will you go?" said he. "To-morrow," said I ; "but how much do you want?" "Nothing, O my Lord, nothing ; for the love of you I go." "But," said I, "for the love of you, O sheikh, I would wish to give something." Well, he would go on swearing that he had loved me so well, he had never met any one before whom he loved so well ; he would go for nothing. Several hours had now elapsed, and then he thought that, all preliminary compliments having been fairly gone through, when I at last desired he would name a price for himself and his people, he *did* name one. "My Lord," said he, "500 ghaziyeh will never repay me. I wish nothing for myself ; it is for my people I ask, and they will never be repaid ; it will be a dead loss to them ; they risk their own lives and their beasts' lives, and no doubt some camel will die by the way ; so, for the love of you, I will go for 500 ghaziyeh. For no one else in the world would I go at any price."

Now, 500 ghaziyeh equals 100*l.* sterling, and I had made up my mind to give at the utmost 500 piastres, or about 4*l.* 3*s.*

So, when he said this, I held my tongue, and thought of the story of Abraham and Ephron the Hittite.* The account given in the book of Genesis of this transaction is, like so many others in the Old Testament, an exact portrait of a scene of daily occurrence in the East. Abraham, a man of great wealth and great influence, lost his wife. He wished to buy some land to bury her with great honour. Ephron of Hebron possessed the most desirable piece of land. Abraham sends for him, and asks him to name a price. The Hittite finds the old man overcome with grief at the death of Sarah, and little inclined to be troubled with the affairs of every-day life, and he knows that he can get any sum he likes to ask, being well aware that for the purchase of a burial-place for his beloved wife the old chief will never bargain. To Abraham's question he gives the regular Oriental answer, "O my Lord, it is thine!" Abraham, however, wishing to finish the matter at once, and not being disposed to go through much form, says, "Nay; but mention your price." Upon which Ephron *did* mention a most exorbitant sum, which Abraham immediately paid him before witnesses.

Well, to return to my Arabs. After remaining silent some time the chief at last said, "What will you give?" "Two hundred piastres" (=400 pence) said I. This immediately created great sensation; they had hoped to have got at least ten times that sum. A general murmur arose, and the sheikh, jumping up in indignation, said "Ana felláh?"—Am I a peasant? Do you take me for a felláh? One by one the Arabs left the tent, and I remained alone, knowing very well, if I remained firm, what the ultimate result would be. In about an hour one came in again, and, squatting down opposite to me, began, with many oaths, to tell me there was no one like me; but that, by the beard of the Prophet, I had offended the sheikh, who would have done anything for me; "but," said he, "if you offer him 400 ghazi (80l.) he will forget it all, and you will be brothers." My answer was that I did not want him to go if he did not like it. I valued the journey at 200 piastres, and if he would go for that, well and good. He then left me in apparent displeasure, swearing and muttering all kinds of oaths. A succession of such visits took up the rest of the day, every new envoy mentioning a lower sum than his predecessor. Some would try what threats would do, and tell me I was in the power of the chief, who could take everything from me, if he chose. Others, old men of the tribe, with hoary beards, would advise me, in a friendly way, to comply, while all concurred in never leaving any flattering speech untried which they thought would operate upon me. I still remained firm to my

* Gen. xxxiii.

200 piastres, reserving to myself, as the last compromise, an extension of the offer.

At last it ended by the chief coming in himself early the next morning : he told me he loved me as his own son, and could not take anything from me, but that if I gave 1000 piastres to his people he would start with me immediately.

This was the time for offering more, and at last it was arranged that for 400 piastres he should supply dromedaries, and we should go next morning. He then bound himself by all kinds of oaths to keep his bargain.

I spent the rest of the day in inspecting the beautiful remains of the city of Bozrah, of which I shall not give any account, because several travellers have already described it ; and a very accurate description of the city, with a sketch of its history, is given in Mr. Porter's 'Five Years in Damascus.' I will only say here that it is mentioned in the Old Testament among the cities of Moab, although it is not to be confounded with another city of the same name in Edom, and not far north of Petra, which is mentioned in Isaiah, and was visited by Burckhardt.

This latter city is now called "Buseireh," or Little Bozrah, the form Buseireh being the Arabic diminutive of "Busrah." There is likewise a third Bozrah situated on the Tigris, and near the Persian Gulf, which was a very important harbour and place of commerce ; and to this city an ancient road leads directly across the desert from Bozrah of the Haurán.

The country I was now about to travel was again perfectly unexplored ground. Some of the nearer cities which lie in the plain had been seen from the Castle of Bozrah, and some of the names noted down ; but no one had yet visited any of them, so I looked forward with considerable interest to this portion of my journey.

I left Bozrah early in the morning, accompanied by three chiefs—for I had forgotten to mention that there were three tribes around the city, and it was necessary to have a chief of each tribe to be secure from the attacks of the others. They were the chief of the "Serhán," a very disagreeable and haughty fellow, who styled himself "Emír es-Serhán," or prince of the Serhán, and he treated me treacherously ; a sheikh of the tribe "es-Serdíyeh," and a sheikh of the "Beni-Sakhar." The two former were mounted on mares, I and my servant each on a dromedary ; the man of the Beni-Sakhar behind me, and a black slave belonging to the chief of es-Serhán behind my servant.

Immediately south of Bozrah is some of the richest land in this part of the East—such a contrast to the journey in el-Hárrah. The first town I came to was on the edge of a wádi, called "Wádi el Botm," and known by the general name only of "ed-Deir."

I wandered about amongst its ruins, but found no inscriptions ;

only on very many houses were simple crosses cut in the dark stone. In all these towns I found square towers, not unsimilar to those at Palmyra, and probably like them were used as burial-places. There were large tanks about this town (or “birkeh,” as they are called in Arabic), in which the rain-water was collected, but they were then quite dry. After ed-Deir, the next place of importance was “Um es-Semák,” a much larger town than ed-Deir, but equally devoid of inscriptions. Next came “Um es-Sérab,” then “Deir el Kaffir,” close to which runs the old Roman road, which led from Bozrah to “Ammán,” the ancient capital of the children of Ammon. This is a continuation of the road which leads from Damascus to the ancient Phæneutus, and then through the Léjah to Bozrah. It is a broad road, and well paved. The Arabs take notice of it, and call it “Derb en-Nasráni,” the Christian’s road. These people entertain the general belief that everything which was anterior to the time of Islám, was done by the Christians.

In an hour more I had before me an enormous city, standing alone in the Desert, and known by the name of “Um el Jemál,” most probably the “Beth Gamul” of Scripture—the Hebrew name meaning “the house of camels,” and the Arabic name, by a transformation which is very common in Semitic names, “the mother of camels.” The ruins in this Desert abound in the prefix “Um,” mother, while on the mountains of the Haurán the prefix “Abu,” father, is as frequent. There are other reasons, besides the mere coincidence in names, for supposing this city to have been the ancient Beth Gamul. It will be found, on referring to the prophecy about Moab, that Beth Gamul, Kerioth, and Bozrah are mentioned together. Bozrah and Kerioth we well know; they lie within two hours of each other, and by far the largest city near them is Um el Jemál.* This is, perhaps, among the most perfect of the old cities which I saw. It is surrounded by a high wall, forming a rectangle, which seems to inclose as much space as the walls of the modern Jerusalem. The streets are many of them paved, and I saw here what I do not think I saw anywhere else, open spaces within the city such as we should call squares. There were some very large public buildings; but although I diligently sought for inscriptions, I only found three: one of them in red Greek letters on a large tower, which I fancy was a prison, or, perhaps, in later times a convent, as there were many red crosses upon it. The houses were some of them very large, consisting usually of three rooms on the ground floor, and two on the first story, the stairs being formed of large stones built into the house-walls, and leading up outside. The doors were, as usual, of

stone : sometimes there were folding-doors, and some of them were highly ornamented.

On reaching this city (as indeed it was my practice in all such places) I left my Arabs at one particular spot in charge of the dromedaries, and posted sentinels on the towers to watch the approach of any foe ; then, taking my rifle with me, I wandered about quite alone in the old streets of the town, entered one by one the old houses, went up stairs, looked into the rooms, and in short, made a careful survey of the whole place ; but so perfect was every street, every house, every room, that I could almost have fancied, as I was wandering alone in this city of the dead—seeing all perfect, and yet not hearing a sound—that I had come upon one of those enchanted places that one reads of in the ‘Arabian Nights,’ where the population of a whole city had been petrified for a century.* I do not wish to moralise too much, but one cannot help reflecting on a people once so great and so powerful, who, living in these houses of stone within their walled cities, must have thought themselves invincible ; who had their palaces and their sculptures, and who, no doubt, claimed to be the great nation ; and that this people should have so passed away that for many centuries the country they inhabited has been reckoned a desert, until some traveller from a distant land, curious to explore these regions, finds these old towns standing alone and telling of a race long gone by, of a people whose history is unknown, whose very name is a matter of dispute ! Yet this very state of things was predicted more than two thousand years ago. Through Jeremiah, God made it known what doom the people of this country, for their wickedness, would have to await. Con-

* As I have frequently been asked how these stone doors were hung, it may be useful to enter into some further detail about the construction of the houses. Every house is built of huge square blocks of basalt, which sometimes are of an enormous length and thickness. All the rooms are rectangular, and the door, which is usually of one solid piece of stone, six feet in height and a foot in thickness, is made in such a manner that above and below, at one end, a projecting piece is left, which is rounded, and thus forms a cylinder of the same diameter as the thickness of the door. These projections are received in two hollows in the stones, one lying on the ground, the other above uniting the door-posts. In this manner the door moves easily, and is placed in so firm a position that it would be almost impossible to wrench it off. In the upper rooms there are small apertures, closed in like manner by a similar but smaller slab of stone—these were the windows : while on the inside of each of these doors and windows a deep groove is always seen, sometimes large enough to admit a man’s arm, in which the bolt used to run—perhaps this was likewise of stone. It may seem an argument against the high antiquity of these houses that the blocks of stone should be found so well chiselled, and the doors so highly finished ; and it would indeed cause serious doubts, because we should hardly have dared to assume that iron instruments were in use in the time of the Rephaim, had we not happily a notice in Deuteronomy that Og’s bedstead or tomb was of iron, and of such proportions that iron must have been very plentiful among them for it to have been used in such immense quantities.

cerning this very country the prophet spoke when he wrote these words : " For the cities thereof shall be desolate, without any to dwell therein ; " * and the people " shall be destroyed from being a people, because he hath magnified himself against the Lord." † In many instances it is not clear how the prophecy has been carried out ; in many cases disputes may arise about the actual fulfilment of a prophecy, but here ; I think, there can be no ambiguity. Visit these ancient cities and turn to that ancient book. No farther comment is necessary.

To return to my account of the city. On one of the houses I found the single word ΟΔΑΙΝΑΘΟC. I hoped that this might lead to the discovery of some Palmyrene inscription, but I could find nothing more. We know how common this name was at Palmyra ; probably some merchant of that city had settled at Um el Jemál, and inscribed his name on his house.

In Suweideh we find a remarkable tomb, evidently of Palmyrene construction, on which Mr. Porter, in 1853, found a Greek inscription to the effect that Odnathos, son of Annelos, had built that monument to Chamrat his wife. The coincidence between the name and the architecture of the tomb struck Mr. Porter, and on a careful examination of this building the other day, I found an inscription deeply cut in the Palmyrene character.‡ The inscriptions are, however, not quite of identical import.

In Um el Jemál there is a fine arch, like the triumphal arches in Roman cities, and under it lies a mutilated inscription in Latin, almost the only one in that language I saw in the Haurán. No doubt this city, from its size and the richness of the soil about it, must have been a most important place under the Roman rule, as in times long before. There are numerous reservoirs here, but, like those in all the other towns about there, they are quite dry. The tombs are outside the walls of the city, so that here, as at Palmyra, they practised extramural burial. After leaving Um el Jemál "el Kibér," as this city is called, I came to Um el Jemál "ez Zughér," or "the little Um el Jemál," and then visited the towns "Subhah," "Subhíyeh," "Um es Senéneh," "Um el Kotein," "Kureim," and others, and then returned to Bozrah. We had passed the nights in the encampments of Arabs of the tribe "Serdíyeh." On reaching Bozrah I paid my Arabs the promised 400 piastres, when I was told that I had promised 100L "No," said I, "you asked 500 ghaziyeh, and I promised 400 piastres." However, it was of no avail ; they brought all the elders of the three tribes to swear that I had promised them the sum they stated ; and, in spite of all the bread and salt and even mutton we had eaten together, they said they would never let me

* Jer. xlvi. 9.

† Jer. xlvi. 42.

‡ Buckingham had copied it before me. See 'Travels in Syria.'

go until I had paid them what they asked. The only thing, I knew, with these people, was to be firm. I told them they might keep me as long as they pleased, or take from me all I had ; but I never would *give* them anything beyond the 400 piastres I had promised. I might have stayed perhaps some days their prisoner, but my friend “Ismail el ’Atrash” of ’Ari, being anxious at my not returning, came down with a large force of his people, rode into the town, and took me off with him. The Arabs, in spite of their bitter hatred of the Drúzes, and although they were far more numerous than my ’Ari friends, dared not attack us, knowing full well that, if they did, the whole nation of the Drúzes would soon be upon them. It may seem that 400 piastres, or about 3*l.* 8*s.* of our money, is a small sum for such a journey, and attended as it was with some risk, for had we fallen in with any of the ’Anazeh we should have been attacked. But although this sounds a small sum to European ears, it is a great deal for a people who have no wants and rarely the means of spending any money. It would have been easier for me individually, no doubt, to have given a larger sum, and it would have been worth the money to save time, but I always felt it my duty in opening a new track, as it were, to consider future travellers. Amongst these tribes no European had ever yet been, and so whatever price I gave would form a precedent for all future travellers. They never again would take less. I regret to say that almost everywhere travellers, and especially English travellers, have been too thoughtless on this head, so that some parts are almost shut up to the traveller, owing to the extortionate demands of the Arab sheikhs. No one, however, has done so much mischief in this way as M. De Saulcy, who has literally closed the road for some time to travellers east of the Dead Sea. If you wish no one to follow in your footsteps, you cannot attain your purpose more effectually than by giving a great sum to the Arabs who accompany you. They are sure to double the demand on the next traveller.

Amidst murmurs and curses we rode out of Bozrah, and glad I was to get out of the town, because when once in the open field a well armed man can always make a good fight, but within the narrow streets of a town you are exposed to very unequal chances. In two hours we reached “Kureiyeh,” the ancient Kerioth, and thence started on our journey amongst the ruined towns east of “Salkhad.” We went out a party of fourteen — the chief, Kubelán, surnamed “el ’Atrash,” and brother to my friend Ismail of ’Ari, his son, ten of his people, my servant, and myself. We were all tremendously armed ; in fact each man was a moving arsenal, and his people were chosen from among the most determined of the Drúzes. The ’Anazeh were supposed to be fairly off,

but we were likely to meet with some stragglers, who if they were numerous would be sure to give us battle. During the summer "Feisál," the redoubted chief of the Rúala 'Anazeh, had been on good terms with Ismail, but simply because that chief of the Drúzes was powerful enough to protect the lands of his people, and Feisál finding he could no longer plunder with impunity made a truce; but this was well known to last only during the time the 'Anazeh were encamped near the Haurán. When once on the move they had the advantage, and would take any opportunity of avenging themselves on the Drúzes. We had likewise other enemies, the Serhán Arabs, from whom I had just escaped. Had I been in that part of the country three weeks sooner, I could have arranged with Feisál to take me all through that country south of Salcah for some days' journey, and then I could have seen all the cities. Now we could only go out a certain distance, because the Drúzes had no dromedaries, and horses could not go very far for want of water. From Kureiyeh we went south and came to "Um er-Rumán," "the mother of Pomegranates." This was a very curious old town. I had heard a good deal about it from the Arabs, but in this case I found the account they had given about its beauty correct. The houses were in a very ruinous state, but the tombs were more than usually handsome, and decorated with carvings of fruit. Yet they were certainly not Roman, but resembled some of the more beautiful tombs outside Palmyra. Leaving "Um er-Rumán" we came successively to a number of these old towns. I do not give an account of each of them here because it would become tedious. I have all their names written down and have copied all inscriptions in them I could find. Amongst the most interesting were "Mashkúk" and "'Anz."

It was evening, and the sun was setting behind us when I saw in the plain to the north a very large number of horses. I was riding with one of the Drúzes some distance behind the party, and remarked to him that he had better be on the look-out, for we must be near some encampment. "Yes," said he, "and they are not only horses but horsemen we see." We then rode up to our party, and we immediately got into order to repel a charge. It was some time before they got near us, although they were coming at full gallop, but as they approached we could see their number was great. They now began to yell, and give their long spears that peculiar quiver which every one who has been among the Arabs will well recollect. We cocked our pieces and presented, they were coming at full speed towards us as if making a charge, when suddenly they seemed not to like the look of us, wheeled round and rode off.

We were not sorry for this, as may be imagined, but we were not at ease even now. We were quite out in the Desert, away

from any support, and we did not know by how large a body we might be attacked in the night. However, we made the best of our way for some time eastwards until we came to a city in which we could intrench ourselves. After placing our horses in safety, we secured ourselves in one of the old houses, and then felt quite safe against any attack.

Before sunrise we were off again, and soon came to the old road leading from Saleah to Busrah on the Tigris. This road I should like to follow straight across the Desert. It might be feasible, but one would be exposed to such frequent attacks of different tribes of Arabs, that it is very doubtful whether the journey would ever be safely accomplished. Under some hills called "Tellúl el Hosn" the road ran, and here I found a town with reservoirs and large buildings, which was probably a station on this road. It were much to be desired that some one should undertake a journey along this road. There must be many stations on it, and most likely some interesting inscriptions would be found giving us some insight into the history of this country. Leaving the road again I went northwards until I reached 'Ormán. This was a place of great importance, and from some inscriptions on a public building which were copied by Burckhardt, who had been the only previous visitor to this place, it is identified with "Philippopolis."*

From 'Ormán an old road leads to Malah, a larger and more interesting town even than 'Ormán. It was very perfect, and had five of those curious towers I have so often mentioned. I had hoped to have found its ancient name, as it must have been even more important than Philippopolis. There were some Greek inscriptions reversed in one of the buildings, but almost illegible.

The road from 'Ormán goes on to "Deir en Nasráni." This was the extent of my journey eastwards. The road turned northwards, and I was told led to "en-Nemáreh," and as this agreed with what I heard before, I had little doubt that this was the great road connecting Bozrah and Palmyra.

This is an interesting fact. We might well expect that in the flourishing days of two such great cities as Bozrah and Palmyra were, a direct road would have existed between them, but it is nevertheless satisfactory to find what in all probability is that old road. It must have been constructed at considerable expense in that portion which passes through the Hárrah, as for many miles every stone had to be removed, and considering the distance traversed and the great breadth of the road, this must have been a work of great labour.

After having spent five days in the Desert in this journey from

* See Burckhardt's 'Travels.'

Kureiyeh I returned to Ayún and thence to Salkhad, so that I had seen nearly the whole of the eastern border of the “Jebel ed-Drúz.” Salkhad, the ancient “Salcah” of Og’s kingdom, I shall not describe, but refer the reader to Burckhardt and Porter. From the castle I now enjoyed the splendid view over the Desert, which those travellers have recorded with such delight; but I had the additional satisfaction of having now seen almost every one of the many towns which are dotted about the plain, and although I eagerly desired to have gone farther and explored more, I turned my back on Salcah—with the satisfaction of having succeeded far more than I could ever have expected, in my original design—and I hope, with thankfulness for having been preserved from the many dangers to which one was necessarily exposed in such a journey. I had, indeed, every reason to rejoice. Burckhardt, who would have given much to go out among these cities, had been prevented from accomplishing his purpose; and it was only because I was peculiarly favoured by circumstances that I had the good fortune to accomplish a journey which far more enterprising travellers than myself had been forced to give up.

Before turning away from Salcah I should like to make a few general remarks on a country once so thickly peopled, and now marked as a desert in our maps, and which is to all intent as real a desert as any portion of that large plain lying between Damascus and the Euphrates.

That the towns situated in this country, like all those of Bashan, are of the very highest antiquity there can be no doubt. All this land in the earliest times was inhabited by a wild and powerful race called the Rephaim, who are mentioned as being in this country in Abraham’s time, and who had at the earliest periods built their cities of stone and walled them round. While the children of Israel were yet in the wilderness south of the Dead Sea, the spies who were sent to examine the land brought back such fearful accounts of these Rephaim, who dwelled in cities “walled up to heaven,” that the Israelites mutinied against Moses for bringing them to fight these people. They appear to have been of enormous stature, so that their very name was the word which came to be used to denote a giant.

In our translation of the Old Testament, indeed, the name Rephaim has frequently been rendered by “giants,” when it was intended rather to refer to the people as a “race,” and so a confusion has arisen. (See for instance Deut. iii.)

Og, we are told, was of the remnant of the Rephaim, and that he was indeed a giant the length of his bedstead shows. We are told “his cities were cities of stone, with high walls, bars, and gates;” these are the cities which the Israelites took from him; these are the cities which in later times the Romans occupied and

adorned, and these are the very cities which still are standing and bearing testimony to the truth of God's word.

Suppose for a moment that no one had ever yet travelled in the Haurán, on reading the different passages in the Old Testament which refer to that country, should we not, when we read the account of such prodigious numbers of stone cities, have expected to find at least some remnant of them now? And when we read in Deuteronomy iii. of "three-score walled towns, and unwalled towns a great number," and we see how small a space Og's kingdom occupies on the map, we almost might feel tempted, as many have been, to think that some mistake with regard to the numbers of these places had crept into the text. But when we go to the very country, and find one after another great stone cities, walled and unwalled, with stone gates, and so crowded together that it becomes a matter of wonder how all the people could have lived in so small a tract of country; when we see houses built of such huge and massive stones that no force that could ever have been brought against them in that country would have been sufficient to batter them down; when we find rooms in these houses so large and so lofty that many of them would be considered fine rooms in a large house in Europe; and lastly, when we find some of these towns bearing the very name that cities in that country bore before the Israelites came out of Egypt, I think we cannot help feeling the strongest conviction that we have before us the cities of the giant Rephaim, the cities of the Land of Moab. These cities have become gradually deserted, as the Arabs of the Desert have increased in number, and now south and east of Salkhad not one of these many towns is inhabited.

It is worthy of notice how many crosses are seen on the houses in these towns. Everywhere in the Haurán crosses are met with, but nowhere in such numbers as in the towns I have just described. These were the cities of Aretas, king of Arabia; here St. Paul first preached, and perhaps even then the first converts might have made themselves known by marking a rude cross on their houses. The larger houses are not especially marked so as to lead to the supposition that these had been houses of assembly for prayer—the crosses were too frequent also for that—no, I rather think, as I have said, that they were intended as a special mark to distinguish the abodes of the Christians from those of the infidels. To one more point I must refer before I leave this subject. I frequently mentioned having found large tanks or reservoirs for water. When I was reading my first paper it was proposed that some gradual upheaval of the soil, from some igneous action, might have caused the present absence of water in these towns. I think that from our finding such large tanks we may argue that then, as now, the inhabitants depended solely upon rain-water, and I cannot help

thinking that, on a supposition which is not a forced one, of there having been many trees near these old towns in former days, we could account for there having been far more abundance of rain than there now is since these trees have vanished.*

I mentioned this suggestion to several geologists, and in support of this view I cited the fact of the amount of rain having greatly increased at Cairo since Mohammed 'Ali planted so many trees about the city. It was, however, doubted whether in a desert, so far away from the sea, the same phenomena would appear. I should be glad if this point were well investigated, as it is an important one in connection with the former history of this country.

With regard to the remainder of my journey I shall say but little, having already drawn out the former part of it so much, and it was that portion of it which strictly came under the head of explorations. Leaving Salkhad, we rode in a short time to Kureiyeh, whence in the following day I again made an excursion to the mountains east of this town, and came to the remains of a temple at "Ain Abu Hamáka," and then visited "Keristh" and "Kaweiris," and so completed my survey of the eastern border of the Jebel ed-Drúz.

I then made for "Suweideh," the traditional birthplace of Bil-dad, the friend of Job. This great city (it is, I think, the largest in the Haurán) is filled with Roman remains; but no inscription has yet revealed to us its name under the Roman government. It is outside this city that the Palmyrene monument is found of which I spoke. From Suweideh to "Kunawát," the ancient "Kenath," is a beautiful ride, the path leading the whole way through the forests of oak.

Kunawát itself occupies the most beautiful position in all Bashan. Many splendid buildings are found here, and in a hippodrome are some remarkable sculptures, statues of horsemen, and a gigantic head, a sketch of which was exhibited at the meeting of the Society, but which was not supposed to be of higher antiquity than the Roman period. At Kunawát I was visited by the great Imám of the Drúzes, probably the most learned man in this country. He was a young man, not quite forty years of age. I had already got the names of places written down several times before, and I asked him to do me the favour of writing down all the names of these places again. I thus have four lists, and in very few cases is there any discrepancy in the spelling, so that we may feel confident of having, at least, the accurate names of the places I saw. We had a very long conversation together, many of the Drúzes sitting

* After reading this paper in March, Sir Roderick Murchison quite supported my view, and cited several instances in Russia of a great decrease of rain having taken place since the removal of forests.

around us in very respectful attitudes, for they look upon their Imám as a very exalted personage.

He would talk but little of his religion, but told me a good deal about "history." He told me that in olden times Abraham had lived, and that he spoke Hebrew, then came Izaac who spoke Syriac, then in our Lord's time Greek was the language of the country, and now all speak Arabic. These he said were the only four languages that had ever really existed. I asked him what he made of English. "O," said he, "that's no language, that is Turkish." I thought it was useless to say more. He told me that Job had been a native of his city, and he took me to Job's house. I asked him who Job was. "O," said he, "Nabi 'Ayúb (the prophet Job) was a great sheikh, who had, oh! such numbers of oxen and sheep, oh! kitár, a very great number, and he ruled this country." He seemed to know nothing of Job's misfortunes; nor did he know the names of Job's friends or anything about them. This is an interesting tradition that these people have preserved, of this country being the land of Job; and it is the more valuable finding it in this way, because if it had been the remains of any invention of the early monks, you would expect that the history of Job's misfortunes would be the circumstance most carefully remembered. I learned a great deal that was really interesting from this Drúz, who came to see me every day I was there. He begged earnestly for books, and showed a real desire to have the people instructed. For an account of this remarkable place I must again refer the reader to Porter's 'Five Years in Damascus.' I heard of some ancient towns—whose names I have—east of Kunawát in the forests, but I did not go to them, as I was now rather impatient to reach the Léjah. From Kunawát I went through "Suleim," then near "Kefr el Laha," and so to "Nejrán," an old town on the south of the "Léjah." I stayed the night there, and a great feast was prepared at which the chief was present, a fine old man, but he was now very weak from age. He talked with much regret of what had befallen Mr. Porter at "Edhr'a;" it was just after he had left the protection of this sheikh that Mr. Porter was attacked and nearly killed. Here I enquired about the practicability of entering the Léjah. It was arranged that we might do it. We took a strong guard, not only on account of the dangers of the Léjah, but because I was determined to come in force to Edhr'a, lest I should experience the same reception that Mr. Porter did. In the morning we started, and followed for some distance an old road; this we presently left, and then the way became very bad. In some places the horses could hardly keep their footing; in others we had to jump and scramble across large fissures in the basalt, so that by the time we reached "Dáma" men and beasts had had enough of it. I saw on the way

"'Ahiri," "Tell es-Sumeid," and other towns. Dáma, which is in the very heart of the Léjah, had been reached, though from the opposite direction, by Burckhardt, while all that part of the Léjah, with the exception of Dáma, which I now saw, was explored for the first time. At Dáma I found some of the grandest specimens of the old houses and stone doors of Bashan which I had seen anywhere. After Dáma I went through a succession of old places of considerable size and well preserved. I give the names of the most important—"Harran," "Lubbein," and "Jerein"—and at last came out on the western side at "Busr el Haríri," a village inhabited not by Drúzes but by fanatical Muslems. They treated us here with little respect; we only gave water to our horses and then rode on to the broad plain which reaches to the Sea of Galilee westwards, and in a short time the black city of Edhr'a was before us. Although we were a strong party, yet it was with some anxiety that I looked forward to our reception at Edhr'a. I was the first European who had been in the place since the attack on Mr. Porter by its fanatical inhabitants; however, we entered the town, and were only assailed by scowls and curses. The next morning I walked all over the city, and copied all the inscriptions I could find. This exasperated the natives, but we were so well armed that they did not like to interfere with us. When I had seen all, I got on my horse and we left this inhospitable place with little regret.

Edhr'a was, I have little doubt, the Edrei of Og, where his last battle was fought, in which he fell, and which determined the fate of Bashan. El Léjah is the ancient region of "Argob" mentioned in Deuteronomy, and called "Trachonitis" in a later time; and all the cities around and within this rocky region were the cities of Og. Of its physical geography I have already spoken, and the description which I gave of the Safáh will apply equally to the Léjah. They are two of the most remarkable instances of a volcanic formation perhaps in existence.

I now had to part with my good friends the Drúzes. I was going straight across the "Jaulán," the old "Gaulonitis," to the Sea of Tiberias, and as I had to pass through two towns, with the inhabitants of which they had blood-feuds, I could not take them with me. They rode out about an hour and a half from Edhr'a, and then took their leave of me. And now came the most unpleasant part of my whole journey. I had to ride across this country quite alone, with my two servants and the muleteers, and these last I knew would run away at the first attack: and not only was the whole country overrun by Arabs, but the towns were inhabited by the most fanatical Mohammedans, who had rarely, and many of them never, been in contact with Christians. On reaching "Nawa," I went directly to the house of the sheikh, and,

although he was far from civil, yet I was not molested. The next day he went with me round the town. On the following day I was attacked on my way to "Fík" by some Arab Feheliyeh, but I succeeded in protecting my property, and in spite of many interruptions actually reached Fík without losing a single article. Here I put up at the sheikh's house, and spent some days there, which I employed in exploring the high land above the Sea of Tiberias, all the wádis or glens which go down to the lake, and the whole eastern shore of the lake. In one of these glens our Lord performed the miracle of feeding the five thousand. I found numbers of ancient towns on the highland of Golan. I was told there were 300 ruined places in Jaulán and Jedúr together. I took down the names of nearly 150, and saw above 30. One was called "Sahm el Jaulán;" this may be the old "Golan," the northernmost of the three cities of refuge on the east of Jordan. From Fík, running down to the lake, there is a great wádi, called "el-Jamusíyeh," or the Buffalo-road, and on a hill rising from the shore of the lake are the remains of a town and a castle called el-Hosn, and which, from its position, there is little doubt, is really the "Gamala" of Josephus. This deeply interesting country all about the Sea of Galilee deserves a paper to itself, and willingly would I give a more extended account of my researches here, the more so because the eastern border of the lake has rarely been travelled, and the wádis, as far as I know, never before carefully explored. I cannot, however, trespass any farther beyond the space allotted to me, but still hope at some other time to be able to contribute something more to the knowledge of the geography of these counties. I am on the eve of starting again for the East, and in the journey I have now before me I hope once more to go to my old cities, and, if all be well, to endeavour to penetrate farther into that portion of the Desert along which the old road to Bozrah leads. I likewise hope to see Mesopotamia, and especially that central portion in which many old cities are said to be standing, and to spend some time at Nineveh, and so to Baghdad and Babylon.

To conclude the account of my journey. After making an unsuccessful attempt to reach "Gadara," owing to the hostility of the "Beni Sakhar," I crossed the Jordan near "Sammakh," and passing by "Kerak," the old "Tarichæa," soon found myself in safety at Tiberias. Here my dangers ended, and thankful I was to get a rest. It was now very late in the year (the end of November), and the early rains had begun, and so I did not spend much time on my journey from Tiberias to Jerusalem. I had already been over most of Palestine, but still very much remained to be done, and I am sure that half a year employed in

the careful inspection of the country west of Jordan would lead to the most valuable and fruitful results.

I am now more than ever convinced that among the evidences of the truth of Scripture, there are few stronger than those—un-designed—coincidences which arise out of the examination of the topography. Before the present century little was known of these countries; but now each few years some researches bring to light more and more facts connected with the early history of the places with which we are so much concerned in Holy Writ. And we may be quite sure that every certain extension of our knowledge in this respect will afford us additional conviction of the scrupulous accuracy of the Holy Scriptures. At the same time such knowledge is not to be attained without some difficulty and risk, but I think that one may well be justified in incurring these, where there is a hope of such important and valuable results being attained.

NOTE ON THE DRUZES.

THESE people, who are now almost the only settled inhabitants of ancient Bashan, do not appear to have made their original settlement in the Haurán. The eastern side of the chain of Lebanon seems to have been the earliest abode of this people with which we are acquainted, but how many centuries they have been settled there we do not at all know. In the twelfth century they were already numerous in that part. Of the Haurán we knew so little until the present century that it is uncertain whether a few centuries ago there were any Drúzes there or not. At all events their number has been continually increasing since 1810, when Burckhardt was there, down to 1857, when I was there; and not only from an *internal* increase of population, but from the gradual reinforcements which the Haurán Drúzes have been receiving from their brethren in Lebanon. Of what race the Drúzes are is likewise uncertain. They are a very mysterious people, and have hitherto baffled all our researches. They say themselves that they come from China, “Belad es-Sín,” which is worthy of attention, because, except to a few learned men in the large towns, the very name of China is unknown; and these people, although they neither read nor write, know very well in which direction China lies. It is beyond India, they say, if you ask them. From their type they are clearly not a Semitic race. They are fair-haired, and of light complexion, strong and well made, and often as tall as northern Europeans. Their countenance is much more manly and determined than that of the Semitic population; and instead of the effeminacy of the Turk, and the want of energy of the wretched Arab, you find amongst these people a real activity and desire for work which reminds one of the Saxon race. The language which they speak is the purest Arabic. They speak as correctly, and pronounce as accurately, as the most educated Muslims of Mecca; and this, I believe, is another strong evidence in favour of the Arabic having been originally to them an acquired language. I believe many philologists will bear me out in this. So, taking all together, I feel, in my own mind, convinced that this people is of an Indo-Teutonic race, which may have come over at some distant period from the other side of the Desert, but whose original country was Northern India, or possibly China.

Their religion is very secret; all we know of it is derived from two books, which were taken from them by the Turks in war, and were sent to Paris, where they were deciphered and published by the celebrated orientalist De Sacy.

It appears that they believe in one God, but without attributes. His first creature was the “Universal Intelligence.” Both God and this Universal Intelligence have been incarnate at different times, but the last time was in the eleventh cen-

tury, when he became a man in the form of the Khalifeh of Egypt, and the Universal Intelligence in the form of his great vizir. After reigning for some time he suddenly vanished, and rose to heaven, and the Universal Intelligence still remained on earth, and visited the faithful Drúzes, to whom he revealed many important facts in connection with the future.

His next appearance will be at the end of all things, and the good Drúzes will be established again in the land of their ancestors—China.

However, even now, they have a conviction that the good Drúzes, at their death, go to China, while the souls of the wicked occupy the bodies of camels, or even of dogs.

They frequently asked me about China, which is indeed their Celestial empire.

This religion, which will be seen to resemble in many respects the Buddhist religion, is again in favour of the far East having been the origin of these people. That they were visited by the vizir, who preached about his mad master, "el Hakem Bi Amr Allah," is matter of history. This khalifeh imagined himself the Almighty, and commanded all the Egyptians to worship him on pain of death. He was a cruel tyrant, who persecuted all people. His end was mysterious; he was probably murdered; but the vizir took advantage of this to spread the report that he had ascended to heaven. When, however, it appeared that the khalifeh was dead, the people no longer made a secret of their own religion, and the vizir, finding his position dangerous in Egypt, escaped to Lebanon, where he found these Drúzes, whose religion already prepared them to receive without doubt the words of this man. The Drúzes have twelve chief priests, who are the initiated, and called "Akkál." They do not drink coffee or smoke; and to them the secrets of the religion are entrusted. When one dies, his place is filled up from among the most discreet and learned of the race. The great priest, or Imám, lives at Kunawát. He told me they had many very ancient books, but what they contained of course he would not say. Perhaps some day we may get possession of these manuscripts, and then we may hope for some real knowledge about this remarkable people.* Their present number is, I believe, as follows:—

In the Lebanon	60,000 men
About Hermon	4,000 "
About el Merj Ibn 'Amer and the 'Akka country	4,000 "
In the Haurán	7,000 "

which gives a total of 75,000 men, without women and children.†

The Drúz women are more carefully secluded than even the Muslem women. They are rarely seen, except they be veiled. The married women wear a remarkable head-dress, very much like a sugar-loaf, made of wood, or, amongst the richer class, of silver: it is two feet in length sometimes, and from it falls a white veil, which completely hides the face. This head-dress is called "tantúr," and is supposed by some to be the "horn" sometimes referred to in Scripture.‡

On the whole, there is no people in the East who give so much hope for the future as these Drúzes. If energetic measures were taken at once, and a well-organised mission established among them, I believe there would be really a great hope of making them Christians. With the Muslems you have not only prejudice to contend with, but what is as bad, effeminacy and inactivity. The sensual and degraded follower of Mohammed will, only after a long struggle, be rescued from his long-contracted and, one may say, hereditary habits of self-indulgence; and until the ruler of the empire be himself a Christian, such a result can never be hoped for, and will never be attained.

* The seven standard theological works of the Drúzes are now in the possession of Mr. Porter, who succeeded in purchasing them a few months before he left Damascus.—ED.

† Mr. Porter places the total Drúz population at about 78,000 souls.—ED.

‡ See Psalm lxxv. 4, 5.